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Farm Broadcasters Letter



Letter No. 2225

August 15, 1985

CROP PRODUCTION HIGHLIGHTS

The highlights of the Aug. 12 Crop Production report of the U.S. Department of Agriculture are as follows: All wheat production is forecast at 2.38 billion bushels, 8 pct. less than 1984; Food grain - wheat, rice rye - is expected to total 70.8 million metric tons in 1985, down 9 pct. from 1984; Corn for grain is forecast at a record high 8.27 billion bushels, 8 pct. more than last year; Feed grain - corn, sorghum, oats, and barley - is expected to total 257 million metric tons, up 9 pct. from 1984; Soybean production is forecast at 1.96 billion bushels, 5 pct. above last year and 20 pct. above the drought-stricken 1983 crop.

SOVIET GRAIN OUTLOOK FAVORABLE

The 1985 Soviet grain production estimate is unchanged at 190 million tons including 83 million tons of wheat and 95 million of coarse grains, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. However, spring wheat production is now estimated at 39 million tons, 1 million tons more than last month's estimate. The increase was prompted by improved weather conditions throughout the major wheat areas. Winter wheat production is estimated at 44 million tons, down 1 million from last month, due to a decrease in grain area. The total grain area was reduced by 1 million hectares to 119 million hectares (297 million acres), the smallest Soviet grain area since 1971.

SOVIET HARVEST

The pace of the Soviet grain harvest has picked up somewhat after a slow start, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. As of Aug. 5, 33.6 million hectares (83 million acres) of small grains and pulses had been cut. This represents about 30 pct. of the estimated small grain area and is below the 1980-84 average. Threshing also lags behind average with only 27.8 million hectares (69 million acres) or 83 pct. of cut area threshed by Aug. 5. In both 1983 and 1984, 87 pct. of cut area was threshed by Aug. 5.

WORLD OILSEED PRODUCTION UP

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's forecast of 1985/86 world oilseeds production is now put at 191.8 million metric tons, 3.4 million tons over last month's forecast and more than 5 million tons over 1984/85. Larger U.S. soybean and cottonseed production forecasts and improved rapeseed production prospects in China, Canada, Poland, and France account for most of the increase. World stocks of major oilseeds will increase sharply. Most of the year-to-year increase in ending stock levels will be in the form of U.S. soybeans.

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COARSE
GRAINS

The projected global output for coarse grains has been raised and trade has been lowered this month for both 1984/85 and 1985/86, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Both U.S. and foreign coarse grain production are forecast at record levels for 1985/86. The major foreign output changes included increases in East European barley and Mexican corn and a decline in Canadian barley. The projected 1985/86 U.S. price ranges for all feed grains were lowered, due to abundant supplies and depressed export demand. Record 1985 corn, sorghum and barley crops and season average prices potentially below the loan rate imply increased use of Government programs.

TO THE SOVIET
WHEAT FIELDS

A three-member U.S. team will visit the Soviet Aug. 19 to Sept. 6 to study that country's spring wheat industry, according to Under Sec'y of Agriculture Daniel G. Amstutz. The team will include two staff members of the USDA and a North Dakota wheat producer. They will visit the Soviet Union's primary spring wheat regions between the Ural Mountains and western Siberia.

AG EXPORTS

U.S. agricultural exports during the first three quarters of fiscal year 1985 totaled \$25.8 billion, down \$4 billion and 14 pct. from the \$29.8 billion exported during the same period in fiscal 1984, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. While exports of grains and feeds and oilseeds reflected the most substantial declines, exports within the cotton, poultry, livestock and sugar and tropical products sectors also experienced more modest declines from a year ago. Commodities experiencing the largest declines included soybean meal, soybeans, soybean oil, wheat, wheat flour, rice, tallow and cotton.

AG. IMPORTS

U.S. agricultural imports during Oct. 1984-June 1985 reached \$15.2 billion, up 9 pct. from the \$14 billion imported during the first three quarters of fiscal 1984, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Much of the increase is a result of additional imports of cocoa and products, fresh fruit, fruit juices, beef, pork and veal. The overall net surplus in agricultural trade during Oct. 1984-June 1985 amounted to \$10.6 billion, down 33 pct. from a net surplus of \$15.8 billion during the same period a year earlier.

FARMS DOWN
2 PCT.

The number of farms in the U.S. in 1985 is estimated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at 2.29 million, down 2 pct. from 1984. The land in farms declined 3.8 million acres from the previous year. The average size of farms increased from 438 last year to 445 acres in 1985.

PRICE FORECAST:
SOYBEAN &
PRODUCTS

The U.S. 1985/86 season average price forecasts by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for soybeans and products are as follows: Soybeans - \$5.10 to \$5.50 per bushel, down from \$5.25 to \$5.95 per bushel; soybean meal - unchanged at \$100-\$130 per short ton; and soybean oil - 24 to 29 cents per pound, down from 26 to 32 cents per pound.

FROM OUR
TELEVISION
SERVICE

INPUTS OUTLOOK...USDA economist Michael Hanthorn offers an overall perspective on farm inputs - farm machinery, fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides - and its impact on farmers. Vic Powell interviews. (446)

NEW DIRECTIONS IN FmHA...FmHA Administrator Vance Clark focuses on some of the changes and new directions taking place under the Farmers Home Administration, and how these changes will affect farmers. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (447)

LIGHTNING DETECTION SYSTEM...Steve German, ALDS project manager, talks about research work being conducted in Boise, Idaho, with the "Automatic Lightning Detection System," or ALDS, to detect and possibly prevent forest fires. Vic Powell interviews. (448)

INFRARED FIRE DETECTION...William Barrus, USDA infrared operations specialist, talks about research being conducted in Boise, Idaho, to detect forest fires through infrared fire detection systems. Vic Powell interviews. (449)

RETAINING OWNERSHIP OF CALVES...University of Illinois animal scientist Doug Parrett talks about factors to consider in retaining ownership of calves, such as economics and good animal genetics. Gary Beaumont interviews. (450)

U.S. MEAT &
POULTRY
PRODUCTION

The total U.S. red meat and poultry production will likely decline in 1986 from this year's anticipated record high level, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Increase in poultry production during 1986 probably will not offset a decrease in red meat output. The lower red meat output is expected to result in higher cattle and hog prices. Sharp increases in milk cow numbers and higher output per cow likely will result in larger milk production and Commodity Credit Corp. net purchases in 1985/86.

ATTACKING
BEE GANGS

Africanized honeybees possess an easily triggered defensive instinct. While the individual sting of one Africanized bee is no more venomous than the sting of the European variety, Africanized bees attack in greater numbers and chase a target more persistently than domestic honeybees. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the best way to avoid a bee gang that's after you is to seek shelter in an enclosed area, such as a house or car. And do close the door. Conservative estimates predict the bees will overwinter in all parts of Calif., across the southern tier of states, and up the East Coast as far as N. Carolina. During the summer, the bees could spread to other parts of the country. Unlike European varieties, Africanized bees often settle where they are likely to be encountered by people. They're found in suburbs and inner cities as well as rural areas. If you notice unusually aggressive bees, notify the local office of the State-Federal Agricultural Extension Service or USDA's APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine office.

OFF MIKE

Open up the August 12 issue of BROADCASTING magazine to page 20, and you'll find a provocative "Monday Memo" article by Orion Samuelson (WGN, Chicago, IL). Orion applauds the efforts of farm broadcasters to inform the ag industry and urban listeners alike. And he challenges the broadcasting industry "...to find people who are knowledgeable in our nation's most basic industry..." to provide agricultural information on radio and television ... And speaking of magazines, Sherry Newell (WJON, St. Cloud, MN) is featured in the July issue of MID-AM REPORTER (Editor, Forrest Bradley, NAFB association member). Sherry has some interesting comments about advocacy journalism ... Something we meant to mention earlier: The two winners of the 1985 NAFB Broadcasting Scholarships are Keith Anderson, a senior at University of Illinois, and Cheryl Ebbert, who is doing post graduate work at University of Florida. Our congratulations! ... Also, belatedly, our congratulations to Ray Kremer (NAFB Senior Sales/Marketing Director). Ray was designated a Paul Harris Fellow by the Mount Dora, Florida, Rotary Club. The Paul Harris Fellows program is a symbol of Rotary's commitment to world harmony ... A man many of you will remember, Edd Lemons, died earlier this month. Edd retired as Extension editor at Oklahoma State University in the late '60s and earlier in his career was farm director at WKY, Oklahoma City. He was 79 ... Gene Kendall (WKTY, LaCrosse, WI) has switched over to straight news work. Earl Hunter is the new farm director for the station ... Eric Parsons is no longer at WKBT-TV, LaCrosse, because of a change in programming policy ... Rod Hiser is the new farm director at KMMJ, Grand Island, NE ... Mike Hergert is no longer at KCMT, Alexandria, MN, because of an ownership change and subsequent programming change.

FROM OUR RADIO
SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1472...(Weekly 13½ min documentary) A new report from the Department of Agriculture indicates that 1986 will bring farmers bigger crops, smaller demand and even lower prices than 1985. Gary Crawford talks with the USDA's number two economist about what this gloomy outlook will mean for farmers and for the current farm bill debate.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1461...(Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; Estimating Soviet crop production; Changing your marketing techniques; More emphasis on soil and water conservation; A controversial pesticide gets the EPA OK.

CONSUMER TIME #954...(Weekly reel of five 2½-3 min features) Gardens in space; Ultra Suede and its look-alikes; Beefalo meat on market; No slowdown in fast food; A healthier diet.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE...Wed, Aug. 21, Export outlook, Catfish production; Thurs, Aug. 22, Poultry production report, Cotton yearbook report; Fri, Aug. 23, Cattle on feed, Red meat production, Fruit outlook; Mon, Aug. 26, South Asia ag. outlook; Tues, Aug. 27, Crop and weather update; Fri, Aug. 30, Agricultural prices report. Dial the USDA National News Line 202-488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. EDT each working day.



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